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# House Unit Plans Early Preparedness Hearings

Closed-Door Sessions to Open Feb. 2 in House; Senate Inquiry Due Week Later

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**WASHINGTON** — The House Armed Services Committee will get a one-week jump on the Senate by starting closed-door hearings Feb. 2 on the American military posture.

Plans for the House inquiry were announced Friday by Rep. L. Mendel Rivers (D-S.C.), committee chairman.

Thursday Sen. Richard B. Russell (D-Ga.), chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said his group will begin closed hearings Feb. 9 on the same subjects.

But where the Senate committee indicated its intention to focus on U.S. policy in Vietnam, as part of the overall defense picture, Rivers singled out problems of military pay and Navy ship building programs as objects of his special concern.

## First Action

Rivers announced the hearings in his first official act as chairman of the committee since succeeding Rep. Carl Vinson (D-Ga.), who retired in January after 50 years in Congress.

Rivers said the committee will cover all world trouble spots, including whether European allies have met North Atlantic Treaty Organization requirements.

He said the committee also will question Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara and defense officials on plans for new manned airplanes and a McNamara plan, announced in December, for combining Army reserves and the National Guard.

"Eroding morale" of military personnel will be a major subject, Rivers indicated.

Rivers has said he will work for a major pay increase for servicemen -- estimated to cost \$111 million a year.

However, a defense message sent to Congress Monday by the President indicated only a "review" of pay scales is planned and that no money is budgeted for a raise.

## Granted Raises

Last year the military received \$190 million in pay raises averaging 3% for officers and slightly less for enlisted men. Top military officers complain this was inadequate.

Rivers said many committee members have expressed concern that building of new ships is failing to keep abreast of the times. He said he expects to question defense leaders closely on plans eventually to convert the Navy to nuclear power.

The Navy got one nuclear-powered aircraft carrier and asked for more, but the last two carriers authorized will use conventional fuel as a result of McNamara's overruling of Navy requests.